16.

THE PROFESSION OF MEDICINE,

ITS STUDY, AND PRACTICE; ITS DUTIES, AND REWARDS.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

SAINT BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL,

ON THE OPENING OF

THE MEDICAL SESSION OF 1850-51.

BY

CHARLES WEST, M.D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS;

PHYSICIAN-ACCOUCHEUR TO THE HOSPITAL,

AND LECTURER ON MIDWIFERY IN THE MEDICAL COLLEGE.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,

PATERNOSTER ROW.

1850.

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ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

TO

PETER MERE LATHAM, M.D.

PHYSICIAN EXTRAORDINARY TO THE QUEEN,

LATE PHYSICIAN TO ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL,

This Address,

EMBODYING, HOWEVER IMPERFECTLY,

THE PRINCIPLES WHICH HE INCULCATED,

IS GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY

HIS FRIEND AND FORMER PUPIL,

CHARLES WEST.

AN

ADDRESS,

&c.

Mr. President, Mr. Treasurer, Gentlemen,

Until within the past few years, the student began his arduous duties at our schools of medicine without any preliminary word of explanation, advice, or encouragement from his future teachers. But this seemed unkindly done; and one of our number is now deputed by the other lecturers to act as their spokesman, and to convey to those gentlemen who are now entering on their novitiate, the assurance of our sympathy, the promise of our help, the proffer of our friendship.

I need not say to you, Mr. President, to you, Sir, our Treasurer, nor to those other gentlemen who take an active share in the government of this Hospital, that our meeting here to-night is no mere ceremonial; that the annual address of the 1st of October is intended to subserve a very different purpose from that of forming a graceful introduction to the business of the session, as the prologue ushers in the play. Its object is to

point out to those gentlemen who occupy the benches of this theatre for the first time, the noble duties, and the serious responsibilities, which the profession of medicine imposes on them; to warn them of the difficulties that may dishearten them, and of the temptations or dangers that may turn them aside, and cheat them of those rewards which will be their portion who rightly study and who rightly practise it. We should not have ventured to ask your presence as spectators at an idle show, but we earnestly desire and thankfully acknowledge the honour and the advantage, on an occasion such as this, of the presence and the sanction of you, Sirs, who in the midst of other and most important duties, have striven every year to increase the facilities for medical education within these walls, and have thus extended the blessings of this noble charity beyond the limits of this metropolis, and the date of our lives, even to distant lands and future generations.

And now, Gentlemen, permit me to turn to you, whom we see here for the first time, and to congratulate you on the choice that you have made of a profession, in the study of which the highest intellect will find each day something new to learn; and in its practice, the largest charity discover some fresh object for its exertions. But I can congratulate you only on the assumption that you had counted the cost when you thus chose, and that you are prepared to find not only that excellence implies unceasing labour, but that your life must be in many respects one of self-denial, and that your rewards will not be those which the

world sets most store by, or which the same amount of intellect, and the same persevering industry, directed into any different channel, would almost certainly command.

It would, however, be any thing but a healthy state of mind in which you should see, at the outset of your journey, all its difficulties and dangers as clearly as you will perceive them hereafter; and I shall have failed sadly of my object, if any thing I say to-night should make you repent of your choice, and desire to retrace your steps. My only wish is, to guard you against some misapprehensions that may dishearten you at the outset of your course, and against others which at a later period may cause you to miss of being either as useful to your fellows, or as happy in yourselves as I sincerely trust you will be.

Three years, to be given up to the undisturbed pursuit of knowledge,—of knowledge most varied in its kind, and each kind of such high interest, that men have willingly devoted their whole lives to its pursuit, and have founded a readily-admitted claim to undying reputation, upon excellence achieved in it,—and this knowledge not merely to be stored up as intellectual sustenance during the busy scenes of your after life, but by its liberal use to prove the source of health and happiness, and life to thousands, such is your present position,—such are your future prospects.

Three years,—it seems a long time to look forward to; but it is a short time for all the work you have to do in it; and many, alas! make it still shorter by

missing in great measure of its uses. To some the subjects so attractive at a distance grow less interesting when looked on near at hand; their difficulty discourages, their number distracts, the less persevering student. He does not seek to conquer the obstacles he meets with by redoubled energy, but he finds out a much easier way,—to evade them. He decides that knowledge, first of one subject, and then of another, is superfluous and unpractical; and (his indolence playing tricks with his intellect) he shapes out for himself, almost unconsciously, a course of study, if so it can be called, from which he has eliminated whatever can distinguish our art from a mere handicraft, or add beauty or dignity to his own character; and thus becomes at last that wildest of all theorists, that most inconclusive of all reasoners, most incompetent of all observers, the so-called practical man. Another errs in a way more entitled to respect, but little less injurious to his usefulness. He devotes his time almost exclusively to some one subject, and, learning of others but little more than enough to pass the necessary ordeals, he leaves the scene of his studies a good anatomist, an excellent botanist, or an expert chemist,—but an unskilful doctor. He has learned much that is good, much that is worth the knowing; but he has not learned what he came to such a place as this to learn; not what he professes to have learned when he settles down in practice, and promises ease to the suffering, health to the diseased. A third may manfully encounter each difficulty, and go on laboriously amassing facts, but not estimating their value, or de-

ducing from them their consequences, or observing their bearings on each other, till he loses in detail all perception of the whole, and finds himself, like an unskilful architect, hindered by the very abundance of his materials from constructing the edifice which they were intended to form.

I spoke of the first of these errors as the error of indolence,—and so it is with the great number; but yet it is an error which some fall into rather from a misapprehension of the purpose of medical education, than from any deliberate or conscious shrinking from the mental effort necessary for the acquisition of knowledge. It is a mistake to suppose that the sole object of your sojourn here is the gaining of the greatest possible amount of practical, technical, acquaintance with diseases and their remedies. It is true, indeed, that every thing you do must be made subservient to this as your ultimate aim, and that the chief difference between the man of great experience and the man of little consists in the more abundant possession of this knowledge by the former. But there are certain pre-requisites, without which all the experience in the world will profit you but little; since, without them, you will be as likely to collect the husk as the precious grain, and to store up things valueless as things of greatest worth. One grand intention of the course of study you are about to pass through here is, to furnish you with these requisites, by such training of your intellectual powers as may best bring forth their vigour, may strengthen your memory, quicken your observation, beget in you the habit of noting and

arranging facts, of estimating probabilities, and of reasoning rightly on that peculiar kind of evidence, on which you will have to found all your decisions, and which falls short in every case of actual demonstration or mathematical certainty. In all your studies there is a twofold object: partly disciplinal, to bring out those qualities of mind of which you will have most need; partly practical, to obtain that knowledge in the application of which your future life is to be spent.

Viewed in this light, chemistry, botany, comparative anatomy,—subjects, the bare enumeration of which now almost alarms you,—will cease to appear as merely superfluous additions to your other studies, keeping you back from more important pursuits; and you will see that, like the young soldier's exercises at drill, they are means by which you both increase your familiarity with the weapons that you will have to wield, and develop and strengthen those powers by which you will be enabled to wield them with efficiency. Still, "Lyfe is short, and scyence is full long:" and some of these studies you will but just have time to glance at. You are not to be botanists, nor comparative anatomists, nor chemists,—but doctors. With each of those sciences you may discipline your minds; and of the grand facts of each may be held fast even by the least retentive memory. It is neither expected nor desired that you should all become botanists,—but it is wished that none of you should be ignorant of the correspondence between the intimate structure of plants and animals: nor comparative ana-

tomists,—but that you should know how the archetypal forms of various animals are but slightly different expressions of the same idea,—all pointing to a unity of design, which runs throughout the whole: nor chemists,—but yet that you should be aware that within the body, as without, the same great laws which govern inorganic nature still obtain; but modified, and made subservient to the support of life, and to the maintenance of health.

It is the possession of knowledge such as this which marks the difference between the man who follows his profession in the spirit of a philosopher, and him who pursues it as a handicraft, limiting his endeavours to the acquisition of just that kind and amount of knowledge for which there will be most demand in the duties of every-day life. The latter, indeed, if for a moment he raises his thoughts beyond this narrow circle, looks out upon irreconcilable difficulties and contradictions; but the same things which seem to him to "clash and interfere," are discerned by the former to be all "concentrick and harmonious;" full of that wisdom with which "God, the divine Harmostes, has ordered them in such tunable and methodical proportions."

If life were long enough for their pursuit, or the majority of intellects sufficiently powerful to grasp the details of all these collateral sciences, and then to bring the knowledge thus acquired to bear upon the subjects of your special studies, the more you learned of them the better. But the labours of ages which

have extended the boundaries of our knowledge, have left the limits of man's life at threescore years and ten, nor can we flatter ourselves with the belief that our powers of mind are greater than those of our forefathers. "We are raised," indeed, "upon the shoulders of the times gone by;" we see further than our ancestors did; things near at hand, too, we discern more clearly; but our horizon is now removed so far that we cannot take in the whole prospect, nor admire, as readily as they did, its symmetry and beauty. The very advance of science, from which mankind at large has gained so much, has thus been attended with a positive loss, in some respects, to the individual. Men formerly embraced in their inquiries the whole circle of knowledge; and their acquaintance with nature was more intimate than ours can well be, because undistracted by the multiplicity of objects which now obstruct the view; their contemplations were not limited to one or two of nature's manifestations, but could take in all.

Still, though this survey is less easy than it would have been in former days, it is not less needful; and the very men who in modern times have most advanced special departments of science, have been men who, like Hunter, and Cuvier, and Davy, were perpetually looking beyond the subject of their immediate investigations, and seeking in each new fact for the general conclusions to which it led—the relation of the part to universal nature.

This habit of mind, too, is for none so essential as

for those who study medicine; for we have not to do so much with those of God's works which are still

"all true, all faultless, all in tune,"

as with those whose beauty has been marred, and their symmetry destroyed. It has, indeed, been said, that by the study of medicine the finer faculties of the mind are oftener blunted, and the finer moral feelings oftener dulled, than by any other intellectual pursuit. I do not believe this; but yet, among the various influences that counteract any such tendency, few, I believe, are more powerful than those called into exercise by turning occasionally from the spoiled to the perfect, from our close familiarity with sickness and decay to

"the worlde that neweth every daie."

This intimate communion with nature, however, is to be attained, not by the exercise of a mere technical memory, how well soever it may be stored, but by a perception of the grand principles which each of the different sciences that you will be taught here enunciates and illustrates. You can be taught, indeed, but little of these sciences, compared with that which may be known concerning them; but the little learning which a wise man said was dangerous, is not that which consists in understanding even a little of the general bearings of one department of knowledge upon another, and of each upon the whole, but is a knowledge of little things—of things of absolutely no value, or valuable only as steps to a result. The former is not superficial; its possession engenders no self-com-

placency, but it keeps alive within us, just in proportion to its extent, the spirit of wonder, the child-like faith, the earnest piety, with which in old times men addressed themselves to studies such as ours.

I have dwelt long on these preliminaries, because I believe your success in the study of medicine depends to a great degree upon the spirit in which you enter upon the task. To have started right is to have half finished; and if you commence in the spirit which I would fain stir within you, you will find yourselves provided with a master-key that will open to you every lock in the temple of knowledge. Ay, and more than this; for, like the student in an old apologue which I remember to have read, who found the temple of knowledge closed by twelve gates, and only one key put into his hand to open them, so do you "open the first lock, and you have opened all;" and you have nothing to do but to enter the various chambers, to admire their wealth, and to appropriate it to yourselves. The right spirit for the youngest student to begin in, is the same as that in which the oldest philosopher pursues his work.

Hitherto, I have been engaged in the endeavour to set before you the uses of those collateral sciences, to which it might at first sight appear that a disproportionate space had been allotted in the plan of study marked out for you. I have striven also to indicate the limits beyond which you ought not to pursue them; because, important though they are, they are yet to be merely subsidiary to the special study of your profession, and should therefore be pursued so

far as they will promote that; so far, and no farther. And, indeed, in the investigation of the structure and functions of the body in health, and the changes wrought in it by disease, and of those powers which nature puts forth for the repair of injury, and for averting the consequences of mischief that is irreparable, you will find enough, and more than enough, to keep alive your interest in the pursuits that will occupy you during the first year of your sojourn here. Study, too, not merely the general principles, but familiarize yourselves with the details of these subjects; for not only is it impossible to know too much about them, but by far the greater part of what you ever can know must be learned here, and learned now. The experience of after years may increase your skill in the treatment of diseases, may give you manual dexterity in the performance of operations; but cannot make up for neglected opportunities of examining for yourselves the structure of the body in health; or the nature of the changes wrought in it by disease. Spend your time, therefore, much in the dissecting room and the dead-house; anatomize the body for yourselves; do not trust to learning its structure from books; such knowledge is worse than none, because it serves to conceal from yourselves your own ignorance. Lose no opportunity of observing the changes wrought by disease, and begin early to make notes of what you observe. Your early notes will probably have little or no scientific value, but they will have great value to you personally, by forming in you the habit of minute and accurate observation. You may

test with almost unerring certainty the accuracy of your own or of any other person's observations by the clearness of their descriptions; and you will find, as you become acquainted with the history of medicine, that its advance has been retarded more by incomplete observation, than by any want of industry, or of right intention on the part of its cultivators.

Important, all essential, however, as the knowledge of these subjects is, you must not rest in it. All the different departments of anatomical and physiological research are practically useful to you, only in so far as by their means you obtain a better conception of the whole complex which constitutes the man; and in proportion as you accustom yourselves to practise this synthesis, and to combine your acquaintance with details, so as to throw light upon the whole, are you furnishing yourselves with one of the most important elements that go to make up a good physician.

To be *this* is the ultimate aim to which all your labours must be directed, and must be directed even at the sacrifice, if necessary, of some favourite pursuit, or of the more exact cultivation of some science in which you may take much interest; for to medicine even more than to any other department of knowledge does the remark of Bacon apply, that "its end is sincerely to give a true account of the gift of reason, for the benefit and use of men."

After your first season, then, well spent in preparation, you may begin to visit the wards of the hospital with advantage, and may try to learn the general characters of disease, and the general processes

of cure. You will probably visit the surgical wards first; and, rightly understood, the practice is a good one. But you must bear in mind the special object with which you now visit them, which is not the learning of surgery in particular, but of those general principles of pathology which constitute the foundation alike of surgery and medicine. And, unless you bear this object in mind, there is much danger lest, amidst all the vast opportunities of such a hospital as this, you should profit but little; passing your time in a sort of busy idleness, wondering spectators of every operation, curious gazers upon each strange or fearful accident or disease; now here, now there, seeing every thing, learning nothing, or picking up some odds and ends of knowledge, enough to enable you to do much mischief, but not enough for any useful purpose. You must return to these wards at a later period, to study surgery; you visit them now in order that you may see transacted on the surface of the body, processes of the same kind as in the medical wards are going on within it, and that, thus seeing them, you may learn to know them better. You may watch here the healing of a wound, the cicatrizing of an ulcer, the means by which the matter of a deep-seated abscess is brought near the surface, and then discharged from the system; and you may notice the way in which the constitution sympathizes with the local ailment, or the local ailment is itself modified for the better or the worse by the state of the system generally. Lessons of the same kind may be learned in the ophthalmic wards; for you may there follow out

in miniature the different processes of inflammation tending to disorganization of tissue, and the different reparative processes by which nature restores the integrity of the once damaged organ, removes the adhesions by which the pupil had been rendered fixed and motionless, and gives again to the dimmed tunics of the eye their wonted transparency.

The child spells before it can read; and the grown man must go through the same kind of labour, and finds that in every science there is an alphabet to be learned, and to be learned thoroughly, before any advance in it can be made. If you spend your time wisely in the surgical wards, you will learn this alphabet, and will thus avoid many of the difficulties that would otherwise meet you on first entering the medical wards. You will have possessed yourselves of the clue to the cipher, and will be able to interpret confidently signs, the import of which another would but guess at.

The knowledge that you have thus gained, too, will guard you in great measure against the temptation to mere desultory observation, or to that watching of rare and curious cases only, which is the besetting sin of many. Cases that are curious and rare, ought, it is true, not to be neglected; for you must not throw away the opportunity of seeing what, perhaps, you may never see again: but they are the common every-day disorders that best illustrate nature's laws—that most swell our tables of mortality, and by the judicious or unskilful treatment of which your reputation will be made or marred. Every case, indeed, if well observed, will yield instruction—this for its rarity, that for its

frequency: fevers, because in themselves or their complications, they present an epitome of almost every disease, and furnish the best subjects for the exercise of the profoundest skill of the physician; dropsies, because they are in one instance the consequence of some transitory ailment, in another, of some incurable malady; and it behoves you to learn to refer each to its real cause: acute diseases, because if unchecked they would soon destroy life, while our art interferes for their cure with a promptness and a certainty that go far to justify the old belief in the divinity of those who first taught and first practised it; chronic affections, because in their management the professor of medicine shows himself in that character which he oftenest assumes, as the servant of nature, not her master, or rather as her ally, assistant, friend. Nor must your care and interest cease even when all hope of cure is gone; for we practise our art with the humbling consciousness that in every instance, sooner or later, it will prove vain; but yet it is our bounden duty to stand by the body in its decay, to alleviate its sufferings, and to render as easy as we can the passage to that better country, where "there shall be no more sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."

But to learn all these lessons you must watch diseases closely; you must bring to their study all the helps and appliances of art, and you must tutor and train your different senses and faculties to use these helps with advantage. You must make up for the

imperfection of your memories by taking notes of what you see and hear; and you must do all this methodically as well as minutely, in order that nothing may escape your notice, and that you may more readily learn the bearings of different phenomena upon each other, and become able to discriminate between important and unimportant symptoms. It will not suffice for this purpose, to note those things merely which may strike you as most important; but you must preserve records of entire cases, observing them, and recording your observations from their commencement to their close. At first it will take much time to do this; and you should therefore begin by taking notes of only a very few cases, but taking them very minutely: as you gain experience, you will almost imperceptibly discover what facts are of little moment, and thus learn to make your histories shorter. Try, too, with reference to each case, to arrive at a diagnosis for yourselves, and to lay down in your own minds the outline of a plan of treatment. The visit of the physician will thus be rendered doubly instructive to you; for it will not merely explain to you the real nature of the disease, and point out the appropriate treatment, but will also show you where the error lay in your judgment concerning it. Such a course of observation, continued day by day, and day by day recorded in your note-book, even with reference to a single case, will do more towards making you good physicians than the less minute observation of a dozen.

Nor does the instruction which may be gathered

from a single carefully-recorded case terminate with the conclusion of the patient's illness. During its continuance, you watched and noted each symptom, and took care that nothing should escape you; you may now, while your recollections are still vivid, read over your notes, and condense them as much as possible, omitting every fact that you now see to be immaterial, and subjecting the whole record to a process of the most rigid analysis; a discipline as useful to your powers of reflection, as was the other to your powers of observation, and no less essential to making you good physicians.

While thus engaged, you will have little time for reading; but I would not have you disquiet yourselves on this score. The time for reading will come afterwards, and will come when you are all the better prepared to benefit by it, from having passed some months in that kind of training which I have just been urging upon you. The books which you may read with advantage at the outset of your practical studies are those only whose object, like that of the lectures which you attend, is, to enable you to understand what you see,—not to do away in any measure with the necessity of seeing every thing for yourselves. You listen to the one, and you refer to the other, just as the traveller consults his map, to make sure of his route, or to learn what some object of interest is to which he finds himself approaching. The traveller halts only just long enough to satisfy himself on these points; and you leave the wards of the hospital for your study, only to solve some difficulty you had en-

countered, or to learn the meaning of some phenomenon you had comprehended but in part.

Afterwards, you may read more, and if you choose your books wisely, and take care that personal observation goes hand in hand with the studies of your closet, you can hardly read too much. But your reading should no longer be confined to those manuals, and compilations, and elementary works which were useful enough at the commencement of your studies; but should now include such writings as those of Sydenham, which both convey information that no lapse of time will render antiquated, and furnish exercise for our intellect, in showing how a master mind dealt with the facts, and doubts, and difficulties of medicine; or such as Laennec's, in which we may trace from their slender beginnings the progress of those discoveries which have rendered the epithet of "ars conjecturalis" no longer applicable to medicine in the large domain of diseases of the chest; while in every page we cannot but admire the humbleness of mind which always attends upon the highest genius: or, like those of Dr. Prout, in which chemistry and physiology have combined to throw a clear light upon ailments before so obscure, that scarcely was a place allotted to them in the systems of nosologists.

The remarks which I have hitherto made may seem to have a special reference to that department of the healing art which constitutes what is strictly called medicine. All of you, however, must study, and most of you will have to practise surgery and midwifery, and to undertake the management of the diseases of women

and children. But I will not run the risk of wearying you by entering into detail with reference to each of these subjects; and, indeed, it is the less necessary to do so, since custom and convenience alone have given occasion to these subdivisions in practice, while all must be studied in the same spirit, and pursued with the same untiring diligence.

There is, however, one point which I cannot forbear to notice in connexion with the pursuits that engage you here. You will not have been long occupied in watching disease in this hospital without observing that, besides the nature and extent of the ailment itself, you have to study the habits, constitution, and peculiarities of the person whom it has befallen. One person will bear up against a most formidable disease, while another will sink under a comparatively slight attack of a similar malady: bleeding and purging, and all the most active remedies in the *materia medica*, will be the means of restoring one man to health, while they would inevitably destroy another, though suffering under the same affection. Hence it is that your study is not so much of diseases, as of the diseased; and the knowledge which books convey is in great measure on this account so defective, that they can never place before you, with reference to any case, all the elements which must enter into your consideration before you can decide upon the prospect of your patient's cure, or the means best adapted to promote it. In each instance, your patient's previous history and habits, his virtues and his vices, his moral strength and weakness, are to you matters, not of idle curiosity,

but of vital moment; and the study of a man's mind becomes an object of as much importance as that of his body.

But, in order to obtain that personal acquaintance with your patient which is often so absolutely essential to your treating his malady with success, you must take a real interest in him and all that concerns him; an interest different from and far deeper than that with which you would regard him, if looked at merely as an object of scientific inquiry. It must be an interest in him as a fellow-man, bound to the world by like ties with yourselves; the sharer in the same hopes and fears, and heir to the same immortality. This, however, will not spring up spontaneously in your minds, even in this place, so well adapted to cherish it; or rather there is some risk lest, without due care on your part, those feelings which our common humanity may at first engender should be extinguished in the overwhelming interest, in a scientific point of view, of all those processes of disease and remedy which you will see every day going on around you. Were I to appeal merely to selfish considerations, however, I should yet urge you to cherish and keep alive such feelings, for they are essential to your understanding your patient aright, essential to your gaining his confidence, essential to your own success. The highest position as a practitioner of medicine is to be gained, not by intellectual vigour only, but in large measure—perhaps in even larger measure, by moral worth. If rightly used, then, what may not this hospital be to you?—a school, not of medicine only, but of the virtues; a place where

you serve an apprenticeship that shall fit you for a life of active benevolence; and which you quit skilled in more than the art of healing,—in the heavenly arts of patience, and self-denial, and humility, and love!

In occupations such as these the three years which seemed so long in prospect will soon have passed away, and all your life long, not you alone but others too will be reaping a harvest, more or less abundant in proportion to the diligence with which you have employed this your seed-time. Need I remind you that as to the husbandman the time of harvest, albeit a joyous time, is yet one of unceasing toil, so it must be with you? He looks forward for his rest to a future day, when he shall have safely garnered all his stores; and you must not look here for perfect rest nor for a full reward. But still, as you go along in the discharge of your daily duties, there will be much to reward you, and those rewards will be of the highest kind. Your lot is unlike that of many whose common business affords but little scope for the employment of the higher faculties of the mind; for it is alike your duty and your privilege to live in and by the constant exercise of your intellectual powers; and, instead of those two grand objects, "Georgica Animi, Fabrica Fortunæ," clashing as they too often do, the culture of the mind will be the great means towards building up your fortune.

Nor is this the only benefit which is assured to you by your profession. Universal experience confirms the truth of the saying of the wisest of men, "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." The

vastness of the domain to be explored, the imperfection of our means, the mistakes in our processes, all the more evident as we learn more, and the shortness of our life, which forbids us leisure to correct in age the intellectual any more than the moral errors of our youth, have called forth from each generation the same complaint.

> "Oh! with what difficulty are the means
> Acquired, that lead us to the springs of knowledge!
> And when the path is found, ere we have trod
> Half the long way—poor wretches! we must die!"

But from this feeling you are spared; for as your object is not the acquisition of knowledge for the purposes of barren contemplation, or idle speculation, or curious inquiry, but for use; so, unless you are most untrue to your engagements, there will be mingled almost imperceptibly through every day a larger portion of "that corrective spice of charity which maketh knowledge so sovereign," than in any other pursuit in which man's intellect can be engaged. The common incidents of daily life, indeed, sleeping and waking, thirst and hunger, furnish problems too hard for us to solve, and thus serve to teach us daily lessons of humility; but "vexation of spirit" can scarcely be engendered in our pursuit of knowledge, when the morning's addition to the store may, before night, find fitting application in the additional relief it helps us to afford to some suffering fellow-man.

Thus to taste the sweets of knowledge almost without the bitter is certainly no mean privilege, and one which may well be weighed against some of those

disadvantages, in a worldly point of view, under which the practitioner of medicine labours. It is, however, a source of regret with many, that large wealth and high station, and the honours of office, and the dignity of rank, form no part of the prizes to which we can successfully aspire; and they not unnaturally refuse to acquiesce in an arrangement the justice of which they do not perceive. But, "sunt *sua* præmia laudi," there are *appropriate* rewards for deeds deserving praise. The statesman, and the lawyer, and the warrior, confer public benefits, and it is most fitting that from the community at large they should receive the rewards of public praise, and public honours. The merchant or the manufacturer in gaining wealth increases every year the number of his dependents, and finds himself, almost without seeking it, possessed of power; and they who in any way promote, or seem to promote, the wishes or the interests of the multitude, will meet from the multitude with a fitting recompense. But you have entered on a different career from any of these; you serve the state in a private capacity, and err if you expect public rewards. Your place is not in the busy mart, or the thronged arena, but in the silence and the solitude of the sick chamber; your heroism is not displayed before a crowd of spectators, nor are the fortunes of a nation dependent on its issue,—but you encounter disease, and expose yourselves to contagion, and run the risk of death, to save, if possible, a single life; and with no other witnesses than your patient, and the few friends who gather round his bed. But high as may

be the intrinsic worth of deeds such as these, it must, I think, strike you, that their merit would be lost, if among the motives to them there were admitted the expectation of large wealth, or the desire of worldly applause. Nor is there merely an incongruity between such acts of self-sacrifice and the craving for public rewards, but, how faithfully soever you may perform the ordinary duties of your profession, there is that in their very nature which, I think, renders any such expectation unreasonable. Not only do not your occupations enable you to sway the opinions, or control the conduct, or govern the destinies of numbers, but you do not even add to the wealth, or increase the power, or extend the influence of any; you have not to do with men at a time when their course is prosperous, or their intellect most vigorous, but you come to them when sad, and stricken, and suffering; you are conversant with all their weaknesses; more even of their wrong doings are exposed to you than to any one else; your functions surely are not those which you can expect the world at large should delight to honour. The benefits you confer are on the individual, and through the individual on the community; the honours you may attain to are not such as titles would enhance, they are the higher honours of personal respect, and gratitude, and affection.

But though I am most anxious to guard you against indulging expectations or desires which never can be realized, I wish at the same time to express my conviction, that there is no occupation in the pursuit of which are to be found more of the elements of the

very highest kind of happiness, than in the exercise of the profession of medicine. You are spared in it from many of the gravest sources of anxiety and disquietude that attend upon most other engagements; and while diligence will almost invariably secure to you an honourable competence, you will be disturbed in its pursuit by fewer clashings between duty and interest than would occur to perplex and harass you in any other calling. The culture of the mind, to which most can turn but now and then in the intervals of business, is your daily duty; the exercise of those virtues of charity, and patience, and compassion, for which others have to set apart particular seasons, and to seek fit occasions, is the employment of your life. How honourable, how useful, how happy, and how truly wise may you not become in the practice of this profession, of all but one the divinest, and the best!

And yet there is a passion that gets admission into the bosoms of many, and most easily, perhaps, into the bosoms of those of highest promise, and of kindliest nurture, and which, unless rightly controlled, spoils much of the usefulness, and still more of the happiness, of men, who would not have been led astray by the inordinate desire of wealth, or the ambition of worldly honours. The love of fame, the longing to establish a reputation which shall outlast the narrow limits of our own lives, is less likely to be gratified in the practice of medicine than in any other pursuit which calls for an equal amount of unceasing intellectual activity; and it will not only spare you much disappointment

to make up your minds to this at an early period in your career, but it will also leave your hearts open to the influence of higher and nobler motives than the love of fame can furnish. There are many departments of knowledge in which he who makes a step forwards does it for all time; many of the discoveries of the astronomer or the chemist, many of the labours of the mathematician, have established truths which remain true for ever. The advances in medicine, however, are far more uncertain; we follow different modes of investigation; we use different remedies from those employed most commonly a century ago, and have even to treat diseases in a great measure different from those which engaged the attention and called forth the skill of our forefathers. Nor is this all; but the qualities that make up the good physician are in great measure incommunicable; they cannot be put on record, but must needs die with him, and their memory can scarcely outlast the generation who witnessed them. Of those who once occupied the foremost rank in their profession, how small the number whose names are familiar to practitioners of the present day; how much smaller their number whose works so survive as, after the lapse of fifty years, to be still appealed to as authorities!

But if the additions you can hope to make to our stores of knowledge are but small, so that the work of a whole life will issue in little more than the dropping a mite into the common treasury, where, though it will remain for the general use and profit, yet the donor of so small a gift cannot hope to be remembered for it;

still the additions that you can make to the sum of human happiness are very large. You cannot ensure for yourselves great scientific fame, or a widely extended reputation, or a lasting remembrance; for as knowledge increases the truth you saw but half, another may discern completely, and his name will take the place of yours; but you can ensure for yourselves that, while living, your names shall never be mentioned without a blessing, and that when gone your "memory shall smell sweet, and blossom in the dust." There is indeed a power in goodness which preserves the name beyond the time when oblivion usually overtakes it, as the balsams and sweet spices of the Egyptians saved the body from decay, while when the evil die,

> "like tales
> Ill-told, and unbeliev'd, they pass away,
> And go to dust forgotten."

If, then, you seek for fame, let it be for such as may earn for you hereafter a place among those whose portraits adorn the hall of our college, thanks to the liberality of a gentleman whose high position, as one of the physicians to this hospital, seems to derive its chief value in his eyes from the opportunity it affords of doing good to others; and who seeks thus to stir in you the desire to distinguish yourselves as they did, not by scientific attainments only, but by moral worth. But even such fame as has been their well-earned portion, while it waits upon good deeds and high deservings, is not to be the motive to them; and they who most merit to be thus held in remembrance will,

at the same time, be most content "to be found in the register of God, not in the records of man." And surely this last hope may well content us all, and we may derive strength for the duties and the trials of the unknown life before us, by looking forward to those rewards, the highest that man can strive after, or heaven bestow,—"Glory, and honour, and immortality," which are promised not to rare talents, nor still rarer genius, but to that "patient continuance in well doing" at which we may all endeavour, to which, by God's grace helping us, we may all attain.

THE END.

GILBERT & RIVINGTON, Printers, St. John's Square, London.